

The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

School of Medicine
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
School of Allied Health Sciences
School of Nursing

Marine Biological Institute
Institute for the Medical Humanities
UTMB Hospitals

Animal Resources Center

January 17, 2003

Angie Frey
Select Agent Program
Attn: Comment for Public Meeting
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road, MS E-79
Atlanta, GA 30333

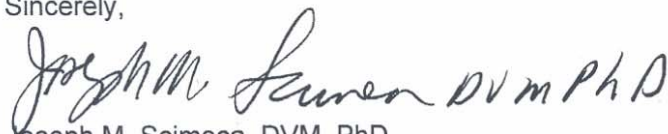
Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in regards to the proposal to include *Cercopithecineherpesvirus 1* or B virus in the list of select agents to be identified for increased monitoring. My specific question is what criteria were used to include B virus on this list? B virus is an endemic viral infection in many species of macaques and can produce a serious, often fatal, infection in humans that are infected and not treated. Human infections though are extremely rare as evidenced by the fact that there have been at most 50 human cases over the past seventy years with 23 documented deaths. This is from a population of literally hundreds of thousands of people who have worked with macaques over the past seventy years. The low number of human cases may reflect infrequent shedding in macaque hosts or difficulty in the transmission of the agent to humans. B virus is also capable of being treated with several available antiviral compounds unlike other viral infections such as rabies, which is not on the select agent list. All these factors make B virus a highly unlikely candidate for research specimens and animals that are healthy, but chronically infected with B virus. If the intent of inclusion is to monitor laboratories that cultivate large volumes of B virus in vitro then the proposed language should specifically identify this as the focus for the regulation. As currently worded, the inclusion of B virus as a select agent will tremendously complicate the use of macaques in biomedical and biodefense research and produce no significant improvement in safety for the American public.

In summary, by including non-human primates (macaques) with endemic *Cercopithecineherpesvirus 1* (B virus), within the select list, would make the normal husbandry and laboratory animal program a cumbersome complex operation for both researcher and animal care staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed change.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Scimeca, DVM, PhD
Director, Animal Resources Center
University of Texas Medical Branch
ACLAM Diplomate

cc: Dr. Adrian A. Perachio
Dr. Wayne Patterson
Dee Zimmerman